

## Connecticut Siting Council



### At-a-Glance

Vacant, *Chairman*

Melanie A. Bachman, *Executive Director*

*Established - 1971*

*Statutory Authority - Chapter 54, Chapter 277a, Chapter 445*

*Central office - 10 Franklin Square, New Britain, CT 06051*

*Number of Employees - 9*

*Recurring Operating Expenses - \$1,890,276.67*

*Organizational Structure - 9 per diem appointed members*

### Mission

The mission of the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) is to balance the public need for adequate and reliable public utility services at the lowest reasonable cost to consumers with the need to protect the environment and ecology of the state.

The Council is within the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) for administrative purposes only. It consists of 9 per diem appointed members - 5 members appointed by the Governor (including the Chairman), 1 member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, 1 member appointed by the Speaker of the House, the Commissioner of DEEP and the Chairman of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA).

### Statutory Responsibility

The Council operates under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA), Public Utility Environmental Standards Act (PUESA) and Sections of Title 22a of the Connecticut General Statutes relating to the siting of hazardous waste facilities. It has jurisdiction over the construction, maintenance and operation of electric transmission lines, fuel transmission lines, electric generating and storage facilities, electric substations and switchyards, community antenna television towers and head-end structures, telecommunications towers and siting hazardous waste facilities.

Telecommunications matters are also regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Telecommunications Act of 1996. Energy matters are also regulated by the electric reliability

criteria, standards and procedures developed by the North American Electric Reliability Council, the Northeast Power Coordinating Council and the Independent System Operator of New England.

Operating under the UAPA and the PUESA ensures that applicants, participants and the public are afforded due process in public proceedings held on applications for Certificates of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificates) and Petitions for Declaratory Rulings relative to proposed jurisdictional facilities and modifications to existing jurisdictional facilities.

Applicants, participants and the public benefit from the standardization and transparency of the review processes, as well as the centralization and availability of information regarding matters pending before the Council. The reports, databases, and related information compiled and published by the Council provide interested persons with access to documented material, including, but not limited to, electric and magnetic fields, costs and life expectancies of transmission lines, forecasted statewide electric supply and demand, telecommunications coverage, and antenna locations within the state of Connecticut.

## **Public Service**

To provide open and transparent information to the public and stakeholders relative to its jurisdiction, the Council continues to expand the content of its website: [portal.ct.gov/csc](http://portal.ct.gov/csc). It maintains databases for telecommunications towers and energy facilities. In addition, agency publications, standard administrative documents and agency forms and procedures are available to review or download from the website.

The agency continually measures the efficiency and effectiveness of its methods through public statements, memoranda of law and informal comments received from its own staff, other state agencies, regional organizations, environmental groups and the public at large. The Council refines its service through recommendations provided by the State Auditors of Public Accounts and legislative committees, as well as through recommendations and suggestions from members of the public regarding content and presentation of information on the website. In addition, the Council reviews and compares different processes and procedures employed by other state agencies throughout the country.

## **Improvements/Achievements for Fiscal Year 2019-2020**

In Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the Council held 5 public hearings to develop substantial evidentiary records and hear public concerns regarding proposed facilities. The Council held 15 energy and telecommunications meetings to render decisions on jurisdictional matters.

Also during Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the Council issued:

- 4 Certificates for telecommunications facilities
- 2 Modified Certificates for existing telecommunications facilities
- 7 Declaratory Rulings for solar photovoltaic electric generating facilities
- 14 Declaratory Rulings for fuel cell electric generating facilities
- 5 Declaratory Rulings for modifications to existing energy facilities
- 9 Declaratory Rulings for modifications to existing telecommunications facilities
- 9 approvals for Development and Management Plans
- 456 approvals for modifications of existing telecommunications facilities
- 11 approvals for modifications of existing energy facilities
- 22 approvals for requests for tower sharing at existing telecommunications facilities
- 3 approvals for FCC Eligible Facilities Requests at existing telecommunications facilities
- 18 approvals for National Electrical Safety Code modifications at existing electric transmission line facilities

The Council posts the complete record of every application for a certificate, petition for a declaratory ruling and tower share request on its website. During fiscal year 2015/16, the Council began posting all past and present modifications of existing energy and telecommunications facilities requests and decisions on the website to further increase efficiency and effectiveness for all interested parties, reduce costs and provide convenient remote access to information.

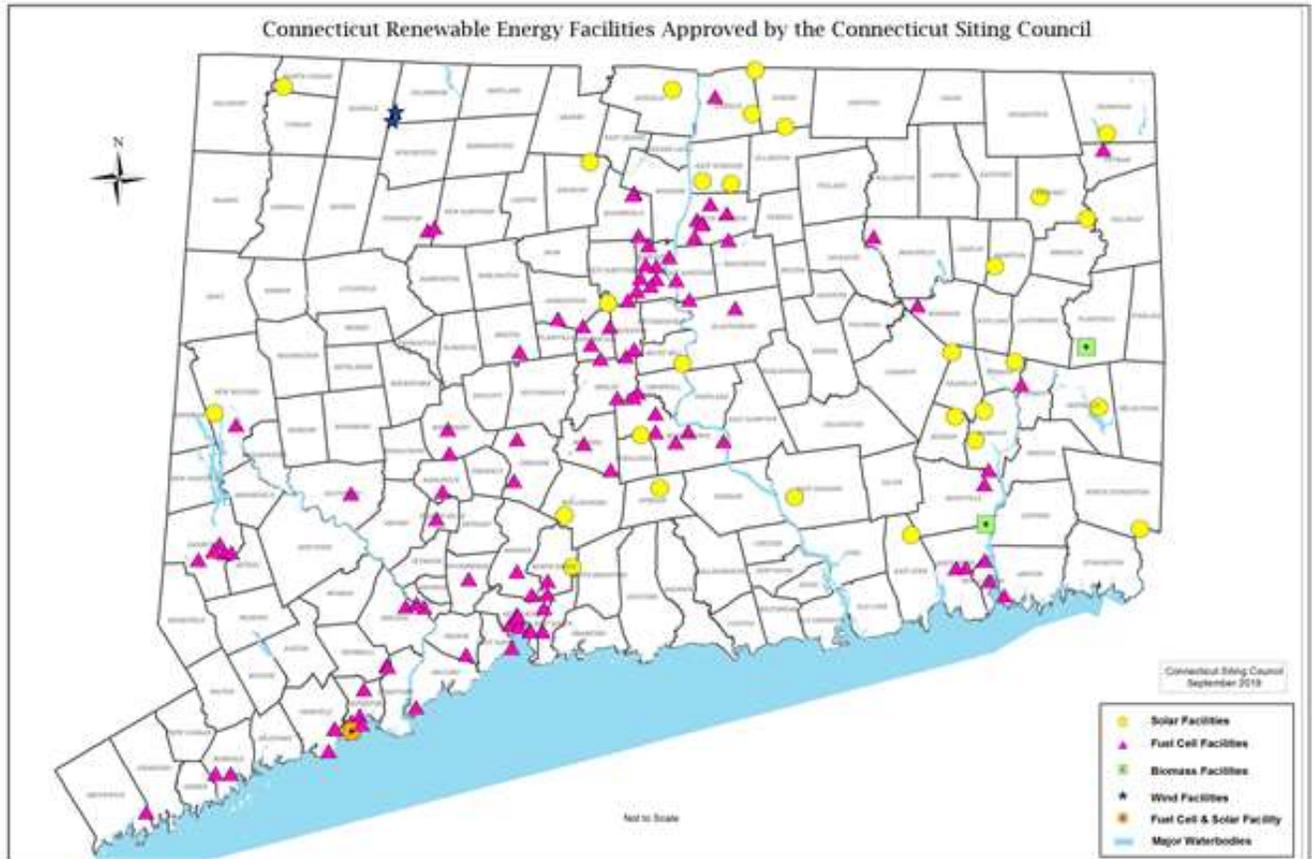
The Council continuously researches and reviews the latest technological advancements throughout the energy and telecommunications industries it regulates to anticipate, address and balance the ever-changing needs and demands of the energy and telecommunications industries and the public.

On March 18, 2020, in order to prevent the spread of Coronavirus and protect the health and safety of members, staff and the public, the Council converted to full remote operations. Despite challenges, the Council continues to maintain a 100% productivity level. Following the directives of Governor Lamont's Executive Order No. 7B, the Council holds regular meetings and public hearings via remote conferencing. The Council also launched a new website in June 2020.

### **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

All certification proceedings include public hearings for the convenience of the public. The Council invites full participation by members of the public, state and local representatives, non-profit groups, environmental protection groups, and parties and intervenors to the proceedings, to ensure all interested persons have notice and an opportunity to be heard.

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 16-50r, the Council must hold a public hearing related to Connecticut's Forecast of Electric Loads and Resources over a ten year period and may issue its own report. This report assesses the overall status of electric loads and resources in the state, taking into consideration historical trends, the projected outlook of load and demand, and the effectiveness of conservation and load management programs. The reports are available on the Council's website. A full report was issued on November 14, 2018. The 2019/2020 Ten-Year Forecast of Connecticut Electric Loads and Resources public hearing was held on November 13, 2019.

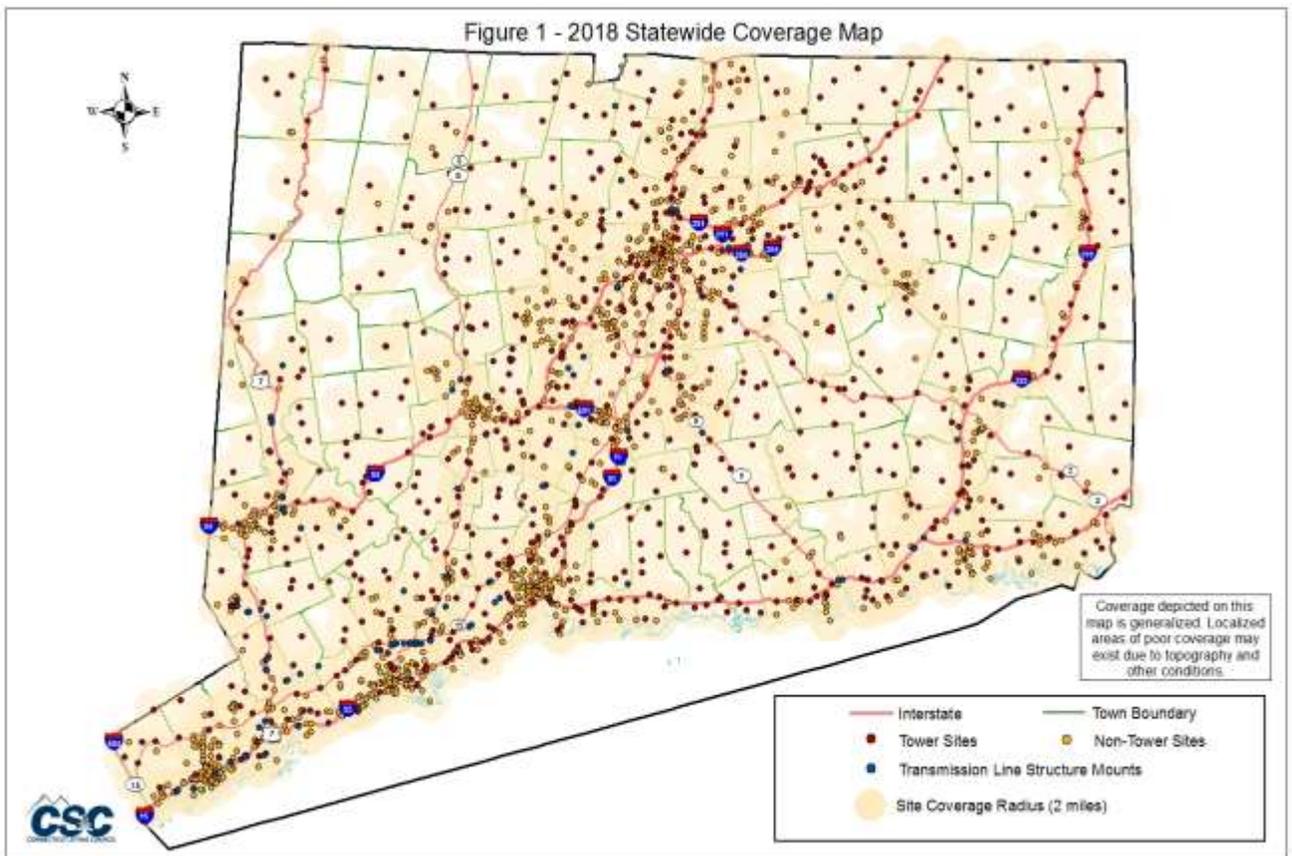


Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 16-50r requires the Council to hold a public hearing every five years related to the investigation and determination of life-cycle costs for both overhead and underground electric transmission lines. The 2018 Life Cycle Analysis Report public hearing was held on September 19, 2018. The Council issued a Life-Cycle Analysis Report on October 11, 2018, which is available on the Council's website.

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 16-50t, the Council shall adopt, and revise as necessary, standards for Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) for Electric Transmission Lines. The Council originally drafted EMF BMPs in December 2007 and annually reviews the EMF BMPs, which are available on the Council's website.

Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 16-50dd requires the Council to develop, maintain and update quarterly a statewide telecommunications coverage database that includes the location, type and height of all telecommunications towers and antennas in the state. This database is updated monthly and posted on the Council's website.

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec.16-50ee, the Council shall develop, and revise as necessary, a plan for statewide telecommunications coverage. The plan assesses population growth in the state and an analysis of existing and projected demands for telecommunications coverage. The Council originally drafted the Statewide Telecommunications Coverage Plan (Telecom Plan) in 2006 and annually reviews the Telecom Plan, which is available on the Council's website.



*Respectfully submitted August 24, 2020,*

*Melanie Bachman, Executive Director*